

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1795

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 0290

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AG

SUBJ: TIME-NEWTSTOUR VISIT TO ALGERIA

1. TIME-NEWTSTOUR VISIT TO ALGERIA, IN SPITE OF MANY LAST MINUTE UNCERTANTIES AS TO SCHEDULE, HAS GONE WELL. GROUP ARRIVED ANNABA NOON JANUARY 29, WAS TAKEN ON BRIEF TOUR OF STEEL PLANT, AND THEN PROCEEDED ALGIERS WHERE PROGRAM STARTED WITH PRESIDENTIAL AUDIENCE AT 6 P.M., RECEPTION GIVEN BY MINISTER INDUSTRY AND ENERGY ABDESSELAM AT 8 P.M, AND BRIEFING BY ABDESSELAM FOLLOWING MORNING AT MINISTRY INDUSTRY AND ENERGY. GROUP DEPARTED ALGIERS 1145 LOCAL.

2. MEETING WITH PRESIDENT (WHICH ALSO ATTENDED BY BOUTEFLIKA AND ABDESSELAM) LASTED FOR ABOUT AN HOUR AND WAS DEVOTED ENTIRELY TO QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION WITH MOST OF THE QUESTIONS BEING ABOUT THE ARAB-ISRAEL PROBLEM. TIME CORRESPONDENTS GART AND GRUNWALD IN PARTICULAR GRILLED PRESIDENT HARD ON HIS ATTITUDES TOWARDS SETTLEMENT AND WHAT HE THOUGHT PLAESTINIANS WOULD ACCEPT. BOUMEDIENE CAGEY IN HIS REPLIES AND CONSENSUS OF GROUP WAS THAT HOME TEAM DEFEATED VISITORS 26 TO NOTHING. GROUP IMPRESSED BY BOUMEDIENE'S QUICKNESS ON HIS FEET AND HOW WELL INFORMED HE WAS.

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3. WE WILL BE PREPARING MORE DETAILED REPORT ON EXCHANGE WITH PRESIDENT BUT THERE ARE TWO REMARKS LATTER MADE WHICH WE THINK WORTH SIGNALING.

A. ONE OF FIRST QUESTIONS RAISED BY GART WAS ABOUT ALGERIAN ATTITUDE TOWARDS AMERICAN STATEMENTS REGARDING ECONOMIC STRANGULATION. BOUMEDIENE GAVE RESPONSE SIMILAR TO HIS REMARKS MADE TO ME AT TIME OF MY PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS AND WAS THEN TOLD THAT HE SHOULD BEAR IN MIND FACT THAT STATEMENTS WERE MADE IN LIGHT OF GENERAL SUPPOSITION THAT IN EVENT WAR IN MIDDLE EAST ARABS WOULD RE-IMPOSE OIL EMBARGO. BOUMEDIENE SAID THAT IN EVENT OF WAR, USE OF ALL WEAPONS BECAME PERMISSIBLE, BUT THIS DID NOT RPT NOT MEAN IMPOSITION OF ANOTHER OIL EMBARGO WOULD BE INEVITABLE.

B. IN TALKING ABOUT MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT PROSPECTS HE SAID THAT SECRETARY HAD STEP BY STEP PLAN WHICH WAS SECRETARY'S BUSINESS (IMPLYING BOUMEDIENE DID NOT AGREE WITH IT). HE THEN SAID ALGERIA HAD GONE ALONG WITH THIS APPROACH WHEREAS IF IT HAD WANTED TO IT HAD THE MEANS TO CAUSE A GREAT DEAL OF DIFFICULTY FOR IT.

4. SECOND STATEMENT IN PARTICULAR WAS SIGNIFICANT, IT SEEMS TO US, BECAUSE ALTHOUGH THIS THOUGHT HAS APPEARED REPEATEDLY IN OUR VARIOUS POLICY PAPERS AND ANALYSES OF ALGERIAN POSITIONS, TO OUR KNOWLEDGE THIS IS THE FIRST TIME BOUMEDIENE HAS SAID THIS QUITE SO FRANKLY OR SO OPENLY.

5. WE UNDERSTAND TIME PLANS PUBLISH TEXT OF EXCHANGES WITH VARIOUS CHIEF OF STATE. BOUMEDIENE IS BIG BOY AND ABLE TAKE CARE OF HIMSELF BUT PUBLICATION THESE TWO REMARKS COULD POSSIBLY CAUSE HIM TROUBLE. WE HOPE THAT TIME CORRESPONDENTS WILL HAVE THE MATURITY OF JUDGMENT NOT TO HIGHLIGHT THEM.
PARKER

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